



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Parks and Recreation Minutes 11/14/2000

Tuesday, November 14, 2000

The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting came to order at 7:30 PM in the Whittemore Robbins House. Commission members in attendance included Joe Carabello, Bernice Jones, Don Vitters and Mary Tegan. Also present were Superintendent of Recreation Joseph Connelly and Mark Shea of the Department of Public Works.

Public in attendance included: Corinna Vanderspek, Chris Hall, Brian Hansbrouck, Carole Kasper, Judy Leich, Sandy Carmichael, Oakes Plimpton, Ellie Vinacco, Suzanne Kaminski, Susan Bernhard, Jen Rothenberg, Roland Chaput, Rupie Lion, Shira Lion and Andrew Leonard.

Magnolia Field Abutter's Concerns Regarding Lacrosse Use of Field

Mrs. Vinacco of 132 Varnum Street reviewed her concerns regarding lacrosse play at Magnolia Field. Mrs. Vinacco was concerned with the lacrosse balls going over the fence into her yard, damage to her fence and the excessive noise level of the air horn that is used during the games. The Commission discussed these concerns. Mr. Connelly will look into the MIAA rules regarding air horns. Mr. Connelly stated that the intention was for the high school lacrosse team to practice at Hurd Field and use Magnolia Field as a game only field. Mrs. Vinacco agreed this would drastically reduce the field use. Mrs. Tegan suggested that lacrosse be asked to practice throwing the ball length wise instead of width wise on the field. Mr. Connelly will talk the AHS Athletic Director and Director of Arlington Youth Lacrosse. Both the Commission and Mrs. Vinacco agreed that during game use the direction of errant throws could not be controlled. Mrs. Vinacco will keep Mr. Connelly updated on the situation throughout the spring season.

Robbins Farm Renovation Discussion with Friend of Robbins Farm

Mrs. Rothenberg introduced herself and gave some background information regarding the Friends of Robbins Farm. Mrs. Rothenberg reviewed their wish list with the Commission.

1. Playground – Enlarge overall space and add new equipment for tots, k-6 and early teens.

The Commission discussed the new playground structure and reviewed appropriate equipment for the early teens. Mr. Leonard asked if the FORF were interested in a community build or a company installation. The FORF suggested that it depended on the amount of funding. Mr. Leonard and Mr. Connelly hinted that a contractor installation is preferable because of the increased warranties. Mr. Chaput indicated that it was the goal of the friends not to duplicate the structure at the Brackett School. Mrs. Tegan indicated that there was some age appropriate equipment for early teens that did not pose increased liability concerns.

2. Ball Field Renovation and Soccer Field Layout

Residents and Mr. Connelly discussed procedures for canceling field use during periods of inclement weather. Mr. Connelly stated that this was a continuing goal of his department.

3. Remove Asphalt Tennis Courts and Leave Potential Trike/Bike Area

Mr. Leonard and Mrs. Rothenberg discussed the appropriate placement of this area. Mr. Leonard indicated that it would make sense to have this area near the playground. Mrs. Rothenberg agreed, but stated that if possible the FORF would like two areas for this purpose. One near the playground and one near the old tennis court site.

4. Add Wrought Iron Fence and Ceremonial Entrance
5. Construct Strolling and/or Jogging Path

The FORF indicated they would like to use non-bituminous material for this area. The hope was to encourage individuals walking and with strollers, not roller blading.

6. Curved Sitting Wall and Skyline Map
7. Natural Ice Skating Area
8. Build New Tennis Court(s)

Mr. Connelly asked the need for additional tennis courts. Mrs. Rothenburg and Mrs. Tegan indicated that there was a need. Mr. Connelly and Mr. Leonard indicated that financially it would make sense to install 2 courts.

9. Additional Trees and Shrubs
10. Picnic Tables and Benches

Mr. Chaput continued with the wish list.

Mr. Leonard and Mr. Connelly addressed the issue of parking. Mr. Leonard asked if the placement of a parking lot on site made sense. The FORF strongly opposed the thought of a parking lot on the Robbins Farm site. Mrs. Jones and Mr. Carabello agreed. Members of the FORF stated that most users of the park would walk to the park. Mr. Connelly and Mr. Carabello reminded the FORF that when asking for town funds it was important to emphasize the town wide use of the park. Mr. Hall expressed his concerns with the parking on Eastern Avenue with the increased attractiveness of the park. Mr. Chaput and Mrs. Jones suggested starting a process now to address alternative solutions to the parking and safety situations. This subcommittee will work with Community Safety and Public Works.

Mr. Chaput continued with the wish list including: sledding, wild flower areas, sundial, constellation map, sprinkler park, water bubblers, exposing existing rocks, fruit trees, excavating the old house foundation, sunken garden, historical signs, decorative trash barrels, ramp entrance at tar hill and restroom facilities.

Mr. Vitters commented that the list compiled was excellent. Mrs. Jones encouraged keeping an open space feeling at the park.

Mrs. Rothenburg and the Commission discussed the funding of the project. Mrs. Rothenburg inquired as to the timing of the bidding process. Mr. Vitters reviewed the Capital Improvement process stating that the Commission has asked for \$300,000 for each of the next three fiscal years. Mrs. Rothenburg stated the FORF would begin fundraising once the master plan was finalized. Mr. Connelly and Mr. Vitters discussed the appropriate procedure for donating to the Park Beautification Fund. The FORF indicated the desire to have the playground renovated as soon as possible. The Commission and Mr. Leonard discussed time frame. Mr. Leonard indicated at the earliest a Fall of 2001 build, but realistically a Spring of 2002 build was more likely.

Mr. Connelly and Mrs. Rothenburg will set up a working session with the Commission and Mr. Vitters to continue discussion on the parks master plan. Mr. Leonard suggested a mid December meeting.

The FORF exited the meeting.

Parallel Playground Bid Revision

Mr. Connelly stated the Parallel Playground project would be rebid with the addition of more alternates. The hope is to get a reliable contractor at a reasonable price. Mr. Vitters suggested sending the bid to the contractors that we have had success with.

Project Review: Hills Hill, Scannell and Thorndike

Mr. Connelly stated that the Hills Hill project has been completed and the Scannell Field project was well underway. Mr. Leonard indicated that he was overseeing both projects. Mr. Leonard reviewed the design phase for Thorndike Field. The Commission discussed the timing of renovating the field. Mr. Leonard indicated an optimal time to plant would be in the Fall of 2001. This

indicated that we may get some Spring use out of the field. Mr. Connelly will wait until this is confirmed before alerting organizations that Thorndike is back on-line for the spring.

Draft of Sign Prohibiting Feeding Waterfowl

The Commission reviewed the draft sign presented to them and discussed appropriate sign size and placement. It was indicated that the view should not be disturbed. Mr. Carabello motioned to approve the language of the sign, seconded by Mrs. Tegan and approved 4-0.

Field Policy Draft Review

The Commission discussed the draft policy and amended 2 sections of the policy. Mr. Connelly stated that he would like to have a public hearing on this policy. Mrs. Tegan hinted that any policy voted on by the Commission could be implemented on a trial basis and would be a work in progress. The Commission discussed the possibility of hiring a "Field Czar" to handle all field issues. Mr. Connelly suggested that the Commission first adopt a policy and evaluate its effectiveness before pursuing additional personnel. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to send out copies of the policy ahead of time and solicit feedback. Mr. Vitters hinted that this meeting should have a time limit. Mr. Carabello motioned to have a separate meeting in January for a public hearing, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0.

Other Business

The Commission discussed the request of the Crosby Family for a bench at Spy Pond. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the request and replace 2 existing benches with the 1 new bench.

Mr. Vitters asked members to consider attending the Spy Pond Shore annual meeting. Mrs. Tegan will attempt to attend the walkthrough and Mr. Vitters will attend the annual meeting.

Mrs. Jones reviewed information from the Open Space Committee and asked the Commission if purchasing abutting property to Poets Corner field should be included in the Open space reports future plans. The Commission agreed that it would make sense to obtain that piece of property if it became available and funding was allocated.

Mrs. Tegan will follow up on the Peirce School renovation project and the playground.

The Commission discussed inviting the new Town Manager, Philip Farrington to the next Park Commissioners meeting.

Maintenance Report

Mr. Shea reported on Pierce Field and Cutter Playground.

Recreation Report

Mr. Connelly stated that the new brochures would be out before Thanksgiving and that registration could now be accepted on-line.

Mr. Connelly stated that the next meeting would be held on 12/12/00 at 7:30 PM in the Fox Library.

Ms. Jones motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Tegan, and approved 4-0.

The Commission adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joseph J. Connelly,
Superintendent of Recreation